

12-2-1974

The Honors Program, Lower Division

The College at Brockport, College Senate

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Routing #12 74-75

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The Honors Program - Lower Division

ALBERT W. BROWN

Resolution # 12
1974-1975

FROM: THE FACULTY SENATE

Meeting on December 2, 1974
(Date)

RE: I. Formal Resolution (Act of Determination)
 X II. Recommendation (Urging the fitness of)
 III. Other (Notice, Request, Report, etc.)

SUBJECT: The Honors Program - Lower Division

(See attached)

Signed Albert W. Brown Date Sent 12/3/74
(For the Senate)

TO: THE FACULTY SENATE
FROM: PRESIDENT ALBERT W. BROWN
RE: I. DECISION AND ACTION TAKEN ON FORMAL RESOLUTION

- a. Accepted. Effective Date _____
b. Deferred for discussion with the Faculty Senate on _____
c. Unacceptable for the reasons contained in the attached explanation
- II, III. a. Received and acknowledged
b. Comment:

DISTRIBUTION: Vice-Presidents: Crawford, Lunsaine, Nelson, Tolson
Others as identified: Antalovic, Singh

Distribution Date: _____

Signed: Albert W. Brown
(President of the College)

Date Received by the Senate: DEC 18 '74

Dec 12, 1974

The Honors Program

Lower Division

Why?

At present Brockport has no official and separate program outside of Independent Study for the motivated student. If it is the philosophy of SUNY to "let each become all that he is capable of being," then the availability of such a program is a prerogative and not merely a convenience. We believe that its implementation would be a means of both attracting and recruiting capable students and of promoting excellence among those already on campus. It would also serve to enhance vocational as well as professional interest. A further advantage is the opportunity it would allow faculty to experiment with new courses and techniques of instruction. The Honors Committee feels strongly that not only is the realization of this program desirable but necessary for the student body, the faculty, and the institution as a whole.

For Whom?

An Honors Program is by its very nature selective; but there is considerable latitude implicit in this term. It is the committee's desire that admission to the Brockport program not be predicated solely on academic achievement as manifested by test scores or high school grades. It is recognized that these criteria do have a part, but we feel that the major emphasis ought to be placed on motivation. In designing the program therefore the committee has concentrated on the intellectually curious student who is academically able, without necessarily being exceptional, and who is highly motivated to pursue a more rigorous academic curriculum. The Honors Program will be open to any student full or part-time at any point so long as he or she meets the admission criteria.

Philosophy

The very nature of the present structure of Brockport College, its division into five liberal arts faculties and numerous individual departments, encourages the Brockport student to explore specialized and specific categories of knowledge. Certainly this philosophy of education has validity in a society which rewards expertise and caters to the specialist. At the same time, it cannot be denied that there is an equally valid approach to learning which attempts to delineate common bonds among various areas of knowledge. This alternative seeks to find that which is universal in the rational analysis of facts, opinions and ideas within a wide spectrum of disciplines. It seeks to train the student in the processes of thinking and logical inquiry and in ferreting out new approaches to old concepts through a broader frame of reference. Its emphasis is on inquiry, analysis, and imaginative synthesis, skills which may later bear fruit in any of myriad specialized fields. Such a goal is fundamental to the liberal arts philosophy.

This Honors Program, designed for the lower division, is founded on that philosophy. It offers the well-motivated, capable student a qualitatively different kind of intellectual experience from that now offered at Brockport. The program for the lower division does not seek to train the specialist through the refinement of his expertise, but rather to capture his imagination, and to provide him with the tools and impetus to step beyond the intellectual confines of his chosen discipline. The program will enable the student to examine the assumptions underlying different disciplines with a fresh and critical viewpoint acquired through a structured integration of normally fragmented fields of knowledge.

What kind of program?

One of the objectives of this program is flexibility, and considering the large number of transfer students, the committee felt that it would be advantageous for the student if it separated the program into upper and lower division honors. Another reason for this separation is that the lower division honors would necessarily be different, for in addition to offering electives, it would contain the core and would replace the present core structure.

The central idea is a cluster concept involving two courses taken simultaneously, a main course and a satellite course, each worth three or four credits. The main course would be somewhat interdisciplinary, for it would be developed within an entire faculty. The course would focus on a problem which would be related to the larger discipline, for example, Social Inquiry, Critical Approaches to Literature, Epistemology, or possibly a trans-faculty offering. The course could be team taught or not, however the faculty saw fit.

Then, simultaneously, the student would be required to enroll in any course, on the appropriate level, in one of the departments of that same faculty. This satellite course could be 1) a new course especially designed for honors students; 2) a special honors section of an existing course; or 3) a regular existing course taken for honors credit. That decision would be dependent upon departmental wishes and resources. The object of the satellite course is to provide some amplification of the more general, theoretical content being discussed in the main course. Students will be encouraged though not required to take two satellite courses. There might also be satellite options in terms of trans-faculty or inter-departmental courses.

Guidelines for the Main Course

- 1) It will provide for individualized instruction.
- 2) It will allow for small discussion groups.
- 3) It will facilitate student-faculty exchanges in the various areas of the Faculty.
- 4) The student will see the relationship of his satellite course(s) to the main course.

The lower division student would be required to take one cluster per semester, giving a total of 8 units instead of the normal 9 units of the Liberal Arts core. These 4 required clusters would represent the same areas of knowledge as are now in effect for the core, and upon their completion the student would have fulfilled his core obligation. It is recognized that there may have to

be some exceptions. In such cases the Director of the Honors Program will consult with the department chairman to find a solution. The committee also understands that in reducing the core from 9 to 8 units the student who leaves the program will have an additional unit to make up.

The Communication Arts core will be met through the normal procedure.

The Honors Committee recognizes that Physical Education is a Liberal Arts major and the P.E. and Recreation faculty should participate in the main course when it is appropriate. In addition any Honors Student may select a course from those designated by the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation for one of their satellite courses.

Criteria for Identifying Honors Credit Arising from a "Regular" Course

A student wishing to take a regular course offering for Honors credit will make a contract with the professor whereby the latter will state explicitly what he expects of the Honors Student and will agree to send a written evaluation of the student's work to the Honors advisor.

Methods for Selecting an Appropriate Satellite Course

It is important that the satellite course(s) be pertinent to the material in the main course, and it is evident that some courses would be more suitable than others in establishing a relationship. Therefore, the committee would ask that the Deans, in consultation with the department chairmen, submit a list of recognized satellite courses for which the Honors Student may enroll without prior consultation with the instructor. This pool of courses does not however eliminate the "contract possibility." Any contract must have the Honors Advisor's approval.

Example of a Special Satellite Course

A new course in Biology entitled Introduction to Research has been developed by Dr. Starr. It is designed to provide a select group of entering freshmen and non-majors with a research oriented, problem solving experience having three major phases: a faculty presentation of research interest areas and advisement; the introduction to laboratory techniques through modules designed to teach these techniques and experimentation accompanied by constant evaluation; and finally, recognition of the application of such techniques to biological problems of today.

Admission

Entering freshmen:

- a) Recommendations—two letters from high school teachers or two people knowledgeable of the candidate's academic potential.
- b) Short essay—Why do you want to enter the program?
- c) High School record and standardized test scores where available.
- d) Any other documentation which the student feels to be of value, i.e., studio art, music tape, NSF project, etc.

A personal interview with an advisor of the program is encouraged but is not mandatory for conditional acceptance. An interview is required, however, before final entrance can be granted.

The committee may accept a student on a provisional basis.

Deferred Admissions

A student once admitted may defer admission if he chooses not to come to Brockport immediately following his high school graduation. Any student already in the program who remains qualified may re-enter automatically after a leave of absence.

After one or more semesters:

- a) letters of recommendation from college faculty
- b) 3.25 gpa
- c) standardized test scores if available
- d) a writing sample (question to be determined)
- e) interview with an Honors program advisor who must write an evaluation as soon as possible following the interview.

Requirements for remaining in the lower division program:

- a) 3.25 gpa
- b) at least a B in each of the courses in the Honors cluster
- c) no pass-fail option in the Honors program

At the close of every semester advisors will submit a record of the performance of each of their advisees to the Honors Committee for review.

When may a student enter?

1. A student may enter the lower division program any time prior to the first semester of his or her second year.
2. However, a student need not apply for admission to the program; he may apply for permission to take a single Honors course. This would allow a student to sample the Honors program, particularly someone in his or her fourth semester.

No student may enroll either in the total program or in a single Honors course if he/she has not met the basic criteria for admission. Any degree of participation requires that the candidate submit to the same review process as those already in the program.

Advising

Each Honors student will be assigned to an Honors advisor. All Honors students are required to meet with their advisor before registration and at the end of the term. Students are strongly urged to see their advisors frequently.

Composition of the Honors Committee:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 1 representative from Humanities,
Fine Arts, Natural and Mathematical
Sciences, Social Sciences, and
Physical Education and Recreation | = 5 |
| The Faculties of Education and Human
Services may have a representative if they
so choose. | = 2 |
| 1 representative from Administration | = 1 |

3 students to be elected by the students in
the Honors Program after the first semester = 3

total membership 11

Membership will be on overlapping terms. During the first two years the initial Honors Committee will direct the program.

The Honors Program Committee is responsible to the office of the Vice-President for Instruction and Curriculum.

The main course of the cluster in each Faculty is the responsibility of the Dean's office.

Selection of Faculty Advisors for the Honors Program

- a) Faculty members of the Honors Program committee are ex officio advisors.
- b) one advisor from each department on campus unless there is an overload of Honors Students in a particular department
- c) evidence of commitment to the program as one of the criteria for membership.
- d) If there is no one interested from a particular department, the faculty Honors Program committee member from the faculty under which the department resides will serve in that capacity.
- e) Initial advisors to the Honors Program will be invited from a list of candidates submitted by members of the present Honors Committee after a review of evidence regarding commitment, manner with students, scholarly ability, etc.

Faculty Load

All teaching in the Honors Program is considered part of the faculty load. Team taught courses are to be included in this recognition with the understanding that the team members are to be present throughout the semester at all classes.

Course Designation

Each main course will be designated by the Faculty Code and Honors.
Example: NAS Honors: Great Ideas in Science.

Evaluation

At the end of each semester the faculty involved in the main course will meet with the Dean, the Chairman of the Honors Committee, the committee representative from that faculty and the student representatives to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the course and to evaluate the entire program. Professors teaching satellite courses will also be consulted.

Upper Division Honors

Two programs will be available: a straight departmental Honors program and an inter-departmental concentration.

Honors recognition

Each stage of Honors work is to be recognized. Honors Students will be invited to the Honors Convocation and completion of Honors work will also be indicated on the student's transcript.

RJS:mwb
11/25/74